NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services

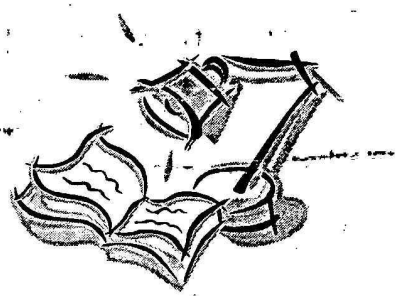
November, December, January 2004-2005 **$3.00** *Volume 17, Issue #4*

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS!

The meeting I LOVED facilitating

The first Sunday in August we had a really enjoyable meeting. We all brought in stacks and stacks of books to share and recommend and rave over. The books ranged from queer children's books, to books with bi characters, to books on queer theory, to books we had read that we loved whether or not they had anything to do with queer people.

What follows is a list of some (not remotely even all) of the books we passed around that evening. We asked as many people as possible to write in with commentary giving a brief description of the book and a bit of a review. You will note a preponderance of commentary that I wrote, partially because I borrowed several that night, came home and devoured them. I think if I had the time, I should do a book club. I love to read, and I love to share books. We always take book reviews for the newsletter, and maybe this will encourage many of you to send them in! Please give me more suggestions!
— Sheri



Specifically Bi Characters

Sing the Four Quarters, *Fifth Quarter* and *No Quarter*
by Tonya Huff (sci-fi fantasy).
An interesting set with magic powers and easy same sex and bisexual characters. Sympathetic heroine, a hot ex assassin.
– Cyprienne

A bisexual lead, other queer characters, and comfortable polyamory round out this trilogy to make it an ideal choice for light reading. It is nice in that it has lots of alternative characters, but that is not the 'point' of the story. Aside from this, it is the kind of series that would make enjoyable reading for anyone into this genre of work. Oh, and she is a local writer to boot! – Sheri

Six of One, *Rubyfruit Jungle* and *Bingo*
by Rita Mae Brown
Rita Mae is a must read for all queers looking to read 'classics' in lesbian literature. *Rubyfruit Jungle* in particular is a classic coming-of-age novel. She also has written several mysteries set in a small town in Virginia starring a lesbian main character and her cat Sneaky Pie Brown. My personal all time favorites though are *Six of One* and its sequel *Bingo*. They are both set in the 1980's in the small town of Runnymeade, MD ("smack on the Mason-Dixon line") looking back to the first half of the 1900s. They are extremely witty as well as having characters comfortable in both their bisexuality and in their polyamory. – Sheri

Switch by Carol Guess
--Mystery, drama, comedy, and bisexuality to boot. A book that I reviewed quite some time back for NBiNW, still a good read.
-- Sheri

Queer/Trans Characters (Novels Unless Otherwise Specified)

Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenide
A recent best seller that does a masterful job of weaving together two main storylines – one a tale of three generations of a Greek immigrant family, and the other the tale of a hermaphrodite's coming of age. I really liked it, but have heard mixed responses to it from the trans/intersexed community. – Sheri

Behind the Mask by Kim Larabee
Set when carriages and horses ruled the roads. The story of an outlaw and her chosen. – Cyprienne

...Continued on page 4

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North Bi Northwest is the quarterly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. It is produced by women and is feminist in content. We feature news and events pertinent to the bisexual community, as well as creative writing and artwork.

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We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone.

We accept submissions on disk with hard copy (PC), typed, legibly handwritten copy or e-mail (sbwn@hotmail.com). If you send us something and we publish it, you get a free issue. Let us know what pseudonym you use, if you do not want to publish under your everyday name.

Views expressed in *North Bi Northwest* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of SBWN. Inclusion in this publication does not indicate the author's sexual orientation.

Deadline for submissions to the new issue: January 21, 2005.

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of self-identified women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network. We promote, in both the heterosexual world, and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face based on our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is non-hierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We have invested ourselves in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

North Bi Northwest

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SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

North Bi Northwest is available by subscription as noted above.

North Bi Northwest is a publication of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of:

Gay Community Social Services
P O Box 2228
Seattle WA 98122-0228

From the Editor...

I am glad the elections are over though I am very unhappy at the outcome of the presidential race. I am amazed at how so many of the people in this country cannot see that our current leadership is changing the United States of America in a negative way. Or perhaps they really like the way things have changed. When people say that life as we know it ended on September 11, 2001 I used to argue that it was not true but the current administration has changed the nature of our country so much that I now agree that the Land of the Free really did end that day.

The Patriot Act has severely limited freedoms that I relied on. Freedom of choice to live my life to the best of my ability as I desired within the limitations of a consumer society. We have rolled back the clock on women's rights, children's rights, worker's rights, environmental cleanup and preservation, consumer protections, corporate accountability. And our right to protest and seek redress for wrongs has been curtailed. We cannot rely on the government to tell us the truth about many things. Reports are edited, facts are deleted, discarded or blurred to comply with the administration's view of the way things should be.

At this time we still don't know who will be the next governor of Washington. They are still counting the votes and the loser may decide we need a recount since the numbers are so close. I am also glad that there is an end to the incessant negative advertisements, the barrage of snail mail, the frequent phones calls demanding my vote, my money or my time.

SBWN had a fabulous and well-attended Flirting workshop. Leilani does a great job with information and fun exercises. In August we had a great meeting about Books. We made a list and are sharing those titles in this issue. I hope it inspires some of you to pick up a few of these books and enjoy. We have a review of *Firelands* to help round out our book theme. We also have another piece from Carole Trainor. And a poem from Diana.

I was involved in a 'team building' event where I work. They loaded us into a big bus, drove us to Bell Harbor, put us on a boat and we ended up at Blake Island. We had lunch at Tillicum Village, were treated to a performance of native dances and played some 'games'. It was an interesting experience. A friend asked me how the performance and general experience of Tillicum Village was and I told her it seemed fine but I have not seen any other such displays and had no basis for comparison. I was surprised that I found the salmon entree to be tasty. Since I have moved to this area I have tasted salmon cooked in many varied ways and have continued to dislike the taste of salmon. This was the first time I enjoyed eating it.

I attended a fundraiser for Verbena called Soup-R-Bowl last night, ironically for me, held at Bell Harbor. I came home from it with a new handmade pottery bowl of my choice. We were offered samples of twenty or so different soups from chowder to spicy to traditional tomato. My favorite soup was butternut squash with roasted sage and pumpkin seeds. Our table bid on a few of the desserts but the auction prices quickly exceeded our limit. I would have enjoyed eating one of the fantastic looking cakes, particularly the one with the SM Barbie theme (the doll was holding a tiny pair of handcuffs and flogger) or the one with the chocolate toolbox on top. The non-food auction items also went for large bids, which was good for Verbena but meant that no one at our table won any of the auctions.

Halloween was a disappointment as far as trick or treaters went. We only had to answer the door once and that was for the neighbor across the street with his small son. My son and I have finally finished all the candy I stocked in anticipation. I wore a silly hat to work on the Friday before and was the only one in my section to dress up. In previous years, my building has sprouted department wide themed decorations, a pumpkin carving contest, and a party in the cafeteria but there was no party this year. There were a few other people in costume wandering around but it was disappointing after the displays of past years.

In August I attended the Eighth International Conference on Bisexuality in Minneapolis. I had a fantastic time and promoted SBWN with a table in the vendor's room.

Cyprienne

Special Notice To Contributors

SBWN is entering into an agreement with EBSCO to have North-Bi-Northwest offered by subscription electronically. If you are a contributor of content, please be aware that future issues of North-Bi-Northwest will be available online.

The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. Le Guin (sci-fi)
A classic feminist sci-fi book that explores a society where gender and family are highly mutable. – Sheri

A Density of Souls by Christopher Rice
A decent first time out by Ann Rice's son. A mix of phantasm and horror and a homosexual boy's coming of age and coming to terms with himself as a young adult. Worth the read. – Sheri

The Book of Salt by Monique Troung
Spend some time with Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas in Paris told from the point of view of their cook. – Cyprienne

Reviewed in an earlier newsletter in depth. Loved this one! –Sheri

The Corrections by Jonathan Franzen
Fantastic book, if a bit hard to read at moments due to the way in which it gets to the heart of family conflict. Features a bi woman without that being the only family conflict she struggles with. – Sheri

Xenogenesis by Octavia E. Butler (sci-fi – poly)
If you are queer, poly, bi-racial or into sci-fi at all – well, you just have to read Octavia Butler and *Xenogenesis* is my all time favorite. Octavia's books and radio interviews (look on NPR) will challenge you to rethink race, gender, sexual orientation and a dozen other components of human make-up. – Sheri

Name All the Animals by Allison Smith
It's a touching, true story (a memoir) about her brother's sudden death when she was in high school, how her strict Catholic family coped with it, and how she eventually found comfort in the arms of a girl she attended her Catholic high school with. Reads like literary fiction but with a little better pace. – Lisa

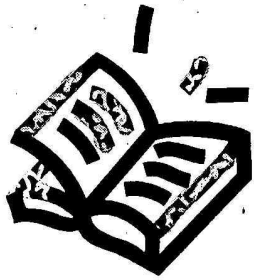
Dreamsnake by Vonda McIntyre (sci-fi – poly)
Good science fiction of the desert societies type. And as a bonus, is very poly positive. -- Sheri
Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café
by Fannie Flagg
If you thought the movie was even ok, you have to read the book. The love between women is also not so hidden in the book as the mainstream tolerable movie was. A tear-jerker though every time I read it. – Sheri

She's Not There

A Departure from the Script

Following Foo, by B.D. Wong (Non-fiction)

Tipping the Velvet, *Affinity*, and *Fingersmith*
by Sarah Waters
I read *Fingersmith* and then *Affinity*. I loved *Fingersmith*. The character development was strong and the plot twists drew me forward rapidly. The love story was electric and touching without being overdramatic or maudlin. There was the hint of Victorian S & M/B & D tone to the story so it was titillating but did not dominate the writing. This one is a must read. I read *Affinity* next and was not so impressed with it. It was all right, but just didn't inspire me to keep reading despite the late hour. – Sheri



Queer Thinking

Female Masculinity by Judith Halberstam

Mosaic 1 by the Northwest Gay and Lesbian History Museum Project
Contains an interview with Cyprienne. -- Sheri
Excerpts from oral history interviews of GLBT people of diverse ages and experiences over the years. A majority of the voices are from people currently living in and around the Seattle area. – Cyprienne
The Drag King Anthology
Discussions, Interviews, and essays that look at performance masculinity, sexuality, and gender discussions with regards to drag kinging and drag kings. – Leilani

I am My Own Woman: The Outlaw Life of Charlotte Von Mahlsdorf
by Charlotte Von Mahlsdorf, Berlin's Most Distinguished Transvestite.
This book was an interesting window on the life of a transvestite who lived before, during and after the holocaust in Germany. Too much detail about furniture for me though. – Cyprienne

Find Me by Rosie O'Donnell
A book on tape read by the author.
Read by Rosie and touching, humorous, and intimate. I couldn't stop listening. I listened to all the tapes one day. – Leilani

Generally Cool, Not Novels

A Primates Memoirs: A Neuroscientist's Unconventional Life Among the Baboons
by Robert Sapolsky
An outstanding combination of social commentary with scientific exploration. Having been to Kenya (where most of this book takes place) I found his stories of adventures in traveling there articulated the 'feel' of the people and place far better than I have ever been able to do. I learned a fair bit of interesting science in the process of reading this book too. A book I have already encouraged all my friends to read. – Sheri

The Rise of the Creative Class by Richard Florida
An interesting analysis of the new creative class in America. Lots of statistics, Seattle is among the top five concentrations of creative-class people. Quite readable and it made a lot of sense to me. Openness to new people and ideas is essential to continuing growth in a creative class area. One of the positive indicators is a high rating on the gay and bohemian index! – Cyprienne

Plato The Symposium published by Penguin Classics

Sexuality and the Divine by Yasmine Galenorn

The Old Girls Book of Spells: The real meaning of menopause, sex, car keys, and other important stuff by Cal Garrison
Very funny, practical magic for our every day lives! – Leilani

The Multiracial Child Resource Book
by Maria Root and Matt Kelley
I haven't finished this yet either. Excellent so far looking at demographics, personal experiences, and taking looks at multiracial, multicultural, and transracial adoption issues. – Leilani

Generally Cool Novels

Life of Pi by Mann Martel
A fantastic novel popular with a lot of book clubs. Smart writing combined with challenging philosophical thinking. I enjoyed this book a great deal. – Sheri

White Teeth by Zadie Smith
An outstanding novel by a young new writer. It is a clever look at an intergenerational story. It easily connects the reader with a diverse cast of cultures, religions and even sexual orientations. It both makes you think and compels you along in the story. I could hardly put it down. -- Sheri

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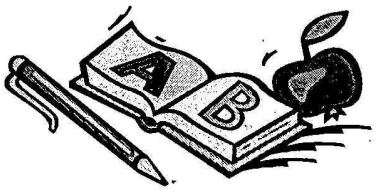
Bi Thinking
Bi Any Other Name by Loraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu
If you only ever read one book about bisexuality, read this one. – Sheri

This is one of the most valuable and insightful books I've come across relating to the bisexual continuum. Coincidentally, it's also one of the first books I ever picked up on the subject, and in retrospect I am quite thankful for that. It's an invaluable compilation of personal perspectives, individual experiences, and thorough testimonials by some very thoughtful and introspective souls. A book you can pick up in intervals, it's laid out in short-story format, but few I've recommended it to have done so. – Nikki

Married Women who Love Women by Carren Strock

Bisexuality: A reader and Sourcebook by Thomas Geller

Dual Attraction: Understanding Bisexuality
by Martin Weinberg



Children's Books

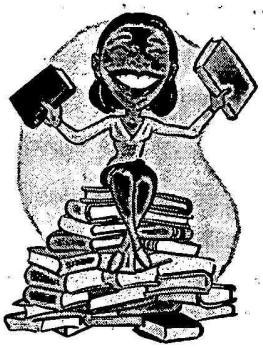
The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch (feminist)
An early book by Munsch with a decidedly feminist twist to a traditional fairy tale. I have bought and given away at least two dozen copies because I like it so much. –Cyprienne

Annie on My Mind by Nancy Garden (lesbian theme)
A teenager discovering the concept of same sex attraction. – Cyprienne

How Mrs. Pampa's Secret Caught Cold and Blew the Whole Thing by Susan Winslow
Written, illustrated, and hand bound by a close but short-term friend of mine many years ago in Cambridge. It has few words but there is a cute snake hidden on every delightful page. – Cyprienne

Joy is Not Herself by Josephine Lee
I first read this as a teenager and was delighted to encounter a children's story with a little bit of magic spells, danger, mischief and a happy and surprise ending. And for those of you so inclined it has horses. – Cyprienne

Anne Cameron - Author
Cameron has a number of children's books about 1st Nation stories and legends like that of the Orca which has female loving female animals and is very touching. Her books are excellent. Cultural exposure and education while entertaining. -- Leilani



How -To Books

Water Gardening in Containers
by Helen Nash and C. Greg Speichert
Easy and beautiful! If you don't believe me ask me for links to my lovely container water garden! – Leilani

Gutsy Women by Marybeth Bond (travel guide)
Haven't read yet it! Looks great! Funny and practical tips for women that travel! – Leilani

Skin Deep (make your own lotions, etc.) by Margaret Dinsdale
Good stuff! I've started making my own cleansers, toners, scrubs, and more! It's just wonderful! – Leilani

Altars Made Easy by Peg Streep
Great examples, definitions, and how-to's. Very gentle and very personal to your personal spiritual practices! I highly recommend! – Leilani

Point Zero Creativity Without Limits by Michele Cassou
Work through creative blocks, understand your own internal critic and move beyond to unleash your creativity! Can apply to all forms of art and creativity! – Leilani

The Psychic Pathway by Sonia Choquette
A workbook to develop one's connection to their intuition and inner guides. Most delightful, yet hard work very worth it! – Leilani

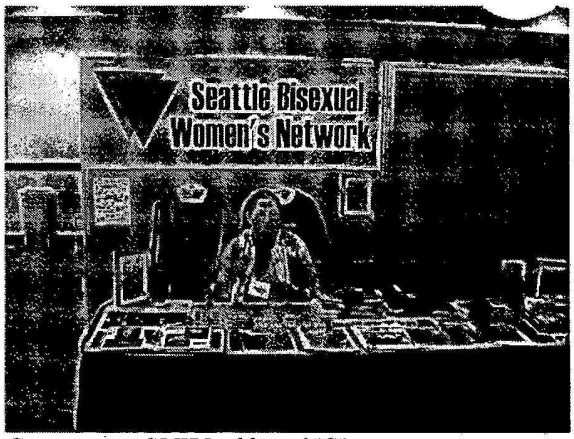
Real Power: Business Lessons from the Tao Te Ching
by James Autry and Stephen Mitchell
Life Skills for Adult Children. Learn spiritual practices that apply to relationships and especially work ones. Find peace and the flow in these situations. -- Leilani

Other books suggested by our members:

Friday by Robert Heinlein
A secretly genetically enhanced female courier, faces discrimination and has lots of great adventures in a near-future, chaotic world. – Carol

Eighth International Conference on Bisexuality
By Cyprienne

The Eighth International Conference was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in early August. There were ten different tracks of workshops, presentations and discussions over four days. In the evenings there were performances and speeches, a dinner and a dance. The last plenary featured an international panel of speakers organized by Robyn Ochs.



Cyprienne at SBWN table at 8ICB

Thursday night's plenary was attended by a good mix of males and females of all ages and all sizes. There was even a nursing mother. Lou Hoffman spoke first. She talked about meeting bisexual activists over the years. She asked us to refrain from name-calling and to remember we were in Minnesota so "be nice." Marge Charmoli was the keynote speaker. She talked about her cable television show called **Bi Cities**, which she hosts with her life partner Anita Kozan. She said that the bisexual eye was a look at love from all sides now. And that her menopausal memory gives new meaning to gender blur. She told us that she came out as bi in 1980 and was the only out bi that she knew of for a long time and it was lonely out there. She mentioned several songs as possible anthems: for lesbians "I don't know how to love him"; for gay men "I feel pretty"; for bisexuals "Both sides now". She told us that research studies in psychology show that yes, we do exist and we are different than gays and lesbians. She said that a study done on bi women now and twenty years ago shows that we have the same problems of invisibility and are perceived as confused or lacking the courage to come out as gays or lesbians. It also showed that we are still perceived as

dishonest, not trustworthy, AIDS carriers and unable to commit. She said that the bi conferences were 'Biodoon' like Brigadoon, we come together for a few days and create a magical place and then fade away.

I had a great time there, missed Jan who planned to be there with me but couldn't come due to finances. The worst times were meal times when I almost never seemed to be around other people and so ended up seeking and eating food by myself. I did have lunch one day with Toni (a sometimes attendee of SBWN), a Dutch woman and a man Toni seemed to know. I didn't know Toni was going to be there so that was a treat. I spoke to Robyn Ochs several times. She came up and gave me a big hug when we first spotted each other. At the end of the con I bought a bunch of buttons from her for SBWN (the bi triangles on black button). I also bought a few for myself and some for Sheri. They had soooo many bi buttons I had never seen before.
I spent the first night with Kathleen and Eric. They are friends of someone Sheri knows from her Kids Count days. Sheri worked hard on finding me someplace to stay on Wed night. I wanted to be fresh for the con when it started on Thur. I moved into the dorm on Thur morning and set up the SBWN table. Kathleen drove me from her house to the site and helped me set up the table before she left. I saw her and Eric during the con a few times.

I talked with Fritz Klein, he's looking for someone already doing news to do a bi news column on his organization's web site. I pointed out that we were not the only bi newsletter out there (Bi Women and now the new Bi Tribune) were both present and I gestured toward their tables in the vendor room. I spent most of Sat at the table in the vendor room. The other days I went to workshops and all the entertainment. The vendor room closed at five on Fri and Sat. I managed to sell three tee shirts, some buttons, a decal and gave away lots of old newsletters, Roberta Gregory's comics and brochures. I bought myself a big glossy from Amazon books about Queer As Folk. I also got a tie-dyed work shirt for myself and one for my son. I went to all the plenaries although I missed half of the last one because I went off to smoke in the hotel bar. It was the only place I could smoke and sit and be inside.

I went to *Rainbow Jeopardy*, A Bi Girl Grows Up, and Building Bisexual Community. I missed Bi dating but got a less than favorable report on that one.

I went to the Bisexual Resource Center breakfast on Sunday, the banquet and entertainment on Friday, the concert on Saturday. I bought some cd's of Magdelen Hsu Li, one of the performers. She apparently became very popular at the San Diego North American con last year. She has this one song, "Fuck Bush", that I just couldn't resist. I got one of those cd's for Sheri as well. Turns out Magdelen's from Seattle!

Magdelen Hsu-Li

Rainbow Jeopardy was fun and I knew most of the answers. It was presented by a trans lady (or a cross dresser, I'm not sure which). There were a lot of answers relating to gays and lesbians and not very many about bisexuality specifically.

Building Bisexual Community was good. I liked the guy who ran it, Luigi Ferrar. He's running a Radical Fairie House in Miami and he managed to convince me to consider visiting Florida again sometime. I had always thought that the Radical Fairies were only for men but he said that is changing and some of them accept women.

Luigi Ferrar

Luigi talked about a Fairie camp that invites women and one of the other attendees seemed to know about it, which sparked a lively discussion of Fairie events. Luigi was also the Saturday evening keynote speaker.

A Bi Girl Grows Up was presented by Annie Goglia from the Boston area. It was a performance piece with commentary and questions afterward. She did short pieces about several incidents in her childhood with lots of emotion and comedy.

Annie Goglia

The dorm was right next door to the main building with the vendor room and theater, so very convenient. I spent some time outside smoking and meeting other smokers. I met this guy Richard whom I spent a fair amount of time with on Saturday night and Sunday. He ended up giving me a ride to the airport on Sunday. He lives on a Sioux reservation and is writing about their history. He was camping in the public parks and drove a very old car. The drive to the airport was downright scary. He had me look through his partners' portfolio while we drove. She does collages, drawings, paintings in a sort of primitive style. He was traveling around promoting her work and visiting galleries trying to get them to show her art. (I could definitely use a partner of that sort myself.)

I had a really good time with very few periods when I was not occupied with con stuff. I hardly had time to write in my journal past Thursday night. I took a bunch of pictures.

The last day after the plenary and breakfast, Richard and I went up to the dead dog party. We sat at a table with Robyn and a bunch of others and talked about the title for her new book. We were trying to help out with the secondary title part. Some there were suggesting the best words to use for 'google searches' and others were making suggestions for the cover art. I pre-bought a copy, so that I will get one as soon as they come out.

Air travel was pretty easy, despite my worries about going through security. My plane was late landing at Minneapolis. We had to circle the airport for half an hour or so as we waited for Air Force One to take off.

For when I am old....
By Diana

I shall wear well-worn soft purple sweatshirts...
and pride rings in my ear...
and I shall spend my social security on sweet wine and remember the parades...
and sit in my well-worn recliner and speak to my grandchildren of civil rights for all....
and listen to the warm wind blow on the back porch holding the hand of my sweet elderly wife...

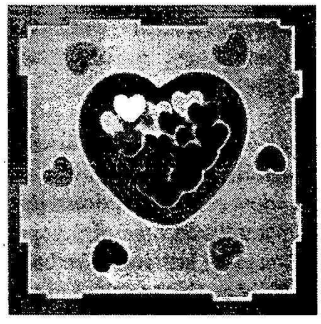
I will take my dogs to the park on warm summer nights if my feet will take me...
and reminisce of my time around gay softball teams...
and when friends come to visit I will speak of old times and show them my pictures from days long ago...

I stillwork hard to muster the fight...
and I still write letters to demand my rights....
for my community, my children or those that come to stay...

I whisper their names in a soft loving way...
those that came before me and have since passed away...
My friends, my family and all that I knew...
together we fought the many and the few...

I look at my life and I see things have changed...
and that my fight for gay rights was not in vain...
and I look at my sweet wife and all we've been through...
and now we sit in the swing with the breeze in our hair...
and I turn to my wife and say "I love you"...

Loving you has been easy, you are a part of me...
and helped me become who I am...
and appreciate me for my presence in your life...
and you understand me like no other can...
and to death do us part was a promise we kept...
and for this I am grateful and truly blessed.



Little Cats and Queer Ones: My Dearest September
By Carole E Trainor

The fickle show their pale faces a million times over. But what of me? Have I not been true? Have I not stood, stark enough; dark enough; naked enough beside the bloodstained glass while the fires tore at the skin of me? Have I not? Have I not lived to tell of significant outcomes?

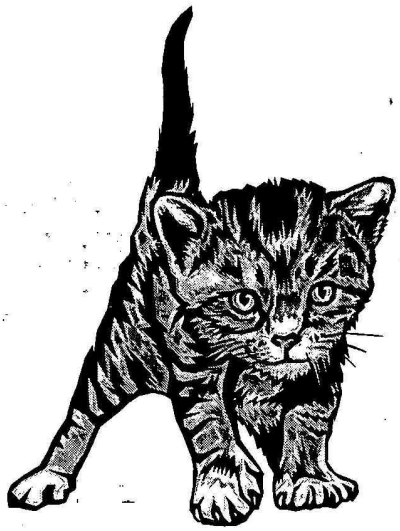
What it must have been for you, my dearest September, to witness the executions—to come all the way back around the world to talk of them at long last. What it must have been for you to know that the very wind that blows kisses across the poor man's back had fanned the fire that sizzled the skins of women. How you must have ached deep into the muscle of you to realize this.

How your blessed rains must have poured themselves down onto the banks of your rivers while strong women fell to the ground and wept; while others knew enough to take notes, then needle, then thread to sew the language of the tongue to the roof of the mouth. How horrible it must have been for you to have witnessed such wretched tragedies, and to have taken the sorrow so deeply into the breast of you. The sorrow goes deep in us all. Like poisoned darts it has shot itself into us, and burrowed itself deeply beneath the skin. There are not enough dandelions to go around, anymore. The children are worn out.

Soon enough the wild witches will rise again, and shake the sturdiest of us to our lowly roots. I will not feign surprise. Nor should you. How many times have we circled our way around this world only to return to this same shallow grave of understanding? It is lowly thought. It is the business of the world. For how many hundreds of years have you and I stood back and watched a single breath of wind blow on the yellow grass of these fields as though the entire planet were a single blow flower? It's there for the taking. Life is not a woman in lead shoes. We were meant to sail across the orange and yellow skies of our tomorrows. That is the message of the woman in black. Now, run! Run along! Get as many envelopes as you can get and fill them with messages of hope. But hurry! Hurry, before they tie us down to a plank of wood and sizzle us for our crime!

All will cling to life and limb, my dearest September, but to no avail. Even the roots of thick tree stumps will be ripped away from their clinging to the earth when the witches and the pagans rise again. This time even brand new babies will be ripped away from their mothers artificial breasts. This time girls will be born with razors on the ends of their tongues. (They will need to slice the sun and moon in two if they are to get their share) But soon, soon enough, the orange and yellow skies will simply drop themselves down on top of these girls like freshly washed fleece. New life will begin to fall from the sky like autumn apples to the ground. The skin of these girls' babies will smell sweeter than any who have come before them simply because witches will have learned by then to sprinkle the heads of their babies with colored sugar.

Listen! Listen to the sounds of tiny hearts being born into mothers nurseries all across the world: "thunka, thunka, thunka" go the hearts of little witches as the sky spits out cold rain and the storm windows turns the outside into fog. Tiny little kittens go "thunka, thunka, thunka..." Tender little queers with black, black eyes. (...It'll be a wild, wild existence, soon enough, my dearest September, for little cats and queer ones....)



'Losing My Credentials': Bisexual Women in Committed Relationships

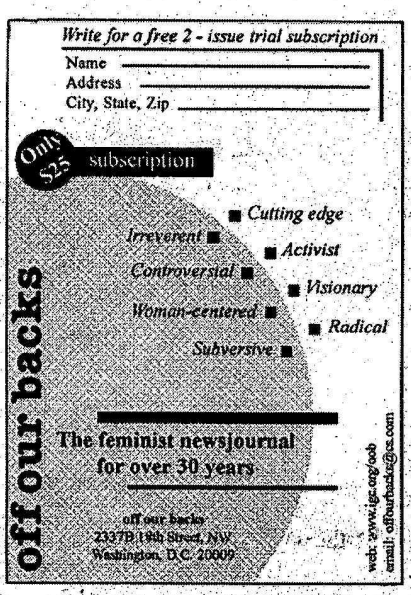
Paula Walowitz, LCPC January 2004

They laugh about it together. When social worker Laura Grimes gets on the phone nowadays to her old friend Sarah – who co-led a bisexual women's support group with her five years ago in Chicago – they often discuss how each of them is now in a committed, monogamous relationship with a woman. And they tease each other about how their bi "credentials" may be slipping away.

It's not entirely a laughing matter, however, for Laura, who has led several bisexual support groups and seen hundreds of women struggling with the question of identity. Single bisexual women may find the identity question a little easier – their options are more open. "Society supports non-monogamy," Laura says, "if you're single." But serious coupling complicates matters.

A bisexual woman who is married to a man, according to Laura, is more likely to maintain her bisexual identity – which may or may not include bisexual behavior – than if she were partnered with a woman. "But it's also more likely to be a secret that festers," Laura explains. Even in a truly monogamous marriage, "your identity and desire don't disappear with a commitment," Laura says. But, to the straight world, calling yourself bisexual conjures up images of three-ways and infidelities, so bi married women tend to keep their bisexuality quiet.

Exploring bisexual behavior for a married woman is usually an even bigger secret. That's because there is very little societal support for non-monogamous marriage and even less for what Laura calls "duogamy," which she describes as an often "desirable" arrangement for bisexual women in heterosexual marriages. Duogamy consists of a separate relationship with each of two people, which distinguishes it from a threesome, where all three people are in the relationship together. A bisexual woman in a "duogamous" arrangement is most often in a sexual and/or romantic relationship with only two people: her husband/male partner and her female lover.



Laura's been there. She spent two years living with both her husband and her lesbian partner. Trying to maintain both relationships demanded a lot of energy, Laura says, which ultimately contributed to both break-ups. In her support groups, most bisexual women who were trying duogamy also ended one or both relationships after wrestling with the daunting task of keeping two relationships afloat. Frequently, she says, the unmarried woman "gets sick of always being second" in importance and decides to leave.

For Laura, the difficulty in being a bisexual woman married to a man was the result of societal misperception. "I found it hard," she explains, "because I didn't like the way society saw me, as automatically in a 'less-than' or subservient role. People assumed things about my role as a supposedly heterosexual wife that they wouldn't as a woman in a relationship with another woman." In relationships with women, Laura says, people assume less about roles. "With Mo, I'm fine being a 'wife,' her spouse, because we define what that means." Part of that self-definition has included Laura changing her last name to Mo's last name. The two have been together five years and fully intend to stay together for the rest of their lives.

Laura's decision to be in a same-sex relationship also arose from her preference for the GLBT community over "the straight world," she says. Even when she was married to her husband, she felt she had more in common with their mutual gay and lesbian friends than with other heterosexually married couples.

But both "worlds" put pressure on bisexuals, she says. "Communities make you choose. We don't like 'gray.' If you're bi-racial, for example, people will ask if you identify as black or white. We need people to fit into our categories. It's why we make it so hard on the trans community." Even when transgendered individuals are in transition, Laura explains, "they have to choose male or female because of society's discomfort."

In Laura's experience, most bisexual women who commit to a relationship with a lesbian eventually shed their bisexual label, even if they continue to quietly see themselves as bisexual. It's just less hassle.

The following elements in the lesbian community may contribute to the gradual – or not-so-gradual – erosion of a woman's bisexual "credentials" once she enters into a same-sex relationship:

- Lesbians frequently assume that women who are in same-sex relationships identify as lesbian. Laura says she finds it "tiring" to repeatedly have to point out that she does not consider herself a lesbian when somebody refers to being "all lesbians here." She has also never set foot in the local women's coffeehouse because she had heard it was only for lesbians, and she didn't want a situation where she would have to explain her identity.

- Many lesbians carry a deep mistrust of straight or bisexual women who are seen as only "experimenting" with same-sex relationships. Historically, partly due to society's disapproval of lesbians, such women have tended to drop their lesbian lovers and go back to men when their female relationship is over. However, this charge of "experimentation," Laura points out, denigrates women's relationships with each other. When a heterosexually married man develops a same-sex involvement, Laura says, he is generally not seen as "experimenting." Likewise, when a heterosexually married woman is also seeing another man, the affair is not typically called an "experiment."

- Fear of family disapproval or other forms of discrimination has resulted in many women's refusal to take on the often-detested "lesbian" label. Lesbians who have been willing to risk "lesbophobia" in the world by calling themselves "lesbian" often feel betrayed by, or at least wary of, a woman who has committed to another woman but not to battling on the front lines by proudly calling herself a lesbian. They may see her bisexuality as a cop-out or even a threat.

- Just as in the gay male community, a woman's bisexuality is often seen as only a transitory step between straight and gay – most gay men and lesbians pass through bisexuality as part of the "coming out" process. As a result, a woman who insists on holding onto her bisexual identity may encounter some dismissal of her bisexual identity as a "phase" she'll grow out of.

All that being said, however, changes seem to be afoot. With the apparent softening of society's view of lesbians, many women who have identified as lesbians for years are tentatively reexamining the bisexual identity they once discarded. These are not necessarily the women who made news several years ago by being "lesbians who sleep with men" or the lesbian celebrities who have jumped the fence back into men's arms. Many lesbians who have been sexual only with women since "coming out" may be starting to feel safe enough to admit to feelings for men as well.

At a party recently, a group of us were discussing bisexuality, and one friend, who I've known for years as a lesbian with separatist leanings in a 20-year monogamous lesbian relationship, said she thought that, "strictly speaking," she was bisexual. Truth is, most of the lesbians I know – both friends and clients – would freely admit to bisexual feelings, and many would, if push came to shove, admit to some bisexual behavior.

Add the fact that increasingly more bisexual women, like Laura, are continuing to hang onto their bisexual "credentials," even in groups of lesbians, can more acceptance be far behind? Identifying as a bisexual may, in fact, be catching on – even in the lesbian community.

Paula Walowitz, LCPC, is a counselor in private practice in Chicago with a focus on GLBT issues, as well as a freelance writer. She can be reached at 773-293-3688 or paula-jean@ameritech.net.

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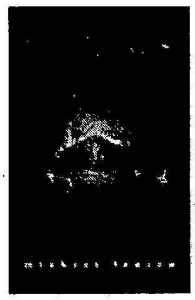
Book Reviews



Local writer blends romance, horror, and historical fiction:
***Firelands* by Michael Jensen**
Published by Alyson Books
Reviewed by Lisa Hake

I have caught myself referring to *Firelands* as a "beach read," if for no other reason than that it is a fun page-turner of the sort that thrills and chills without requiring the patience for literary fiction. But "beach read" is not a phrase that does justice to the palpable sense of place Tacoma writer Michael Jensen creates in this meticulously researched historical novel set on the icy Ohio frontier in 1799. Nor does it prepare the reader for the spine-tingling suspense and horror that befalls the characters who have settled there. And it does not encompass the subtle, playful, tender, and sometimes tragic portrayal of love between men in this unforgiving social and natural environment. It does, however, hit the nail on the head as far as the hot sex goes.

Firelands is Jensen's second novel. It is a continuation of sorts of *Frontiers*, the story of young John Chapman, also known as Johnny Appleseed. Those who have read *Frontiers* will recognize a number of characters, including Gwennie, the reserved yet comically loving Native American woman, and sexy Palmer, Chapman's love. Chapman himself plays a significant role in *Firelands*, but Cole Seavey is the focus of this novel. Cole is a bumbling and loveable young pioneer searching for his brother. Over the course of the story he is attacked by a strange and terrifying creature in the woods, is rescued by and falls in love with a young Indian brave named Pakim, and becomes betrothed to his brother's wife. It is a novel with many twists and turns, apparently. Cole befriends Chapman and Palmer and Gwennie, but otherwise does not fit well into the town of Hugh's Lick, a desperate settlement plagued by an early winter, the threat of starvation, and now terrorized by the creature that attacked Cole.

Jensen effectively weaves Native American mythology, American history, and the love that dare not speak its name into both the fallibility and hidden strength of the humans trying to survive in extreme conditions. The icy temperatures and falling snow seem to be an extension of the cold suspicion with which the settlers regard Cole and his friends, whether it is because of the color of their skin or whom they love. Jensen

does not shy away from portraying the desperate acts that desperate people commit when they are truly afraid. Yet throughout, the story is warmed by friendships formed and lovers connecting in spite of the harshness of the environment.

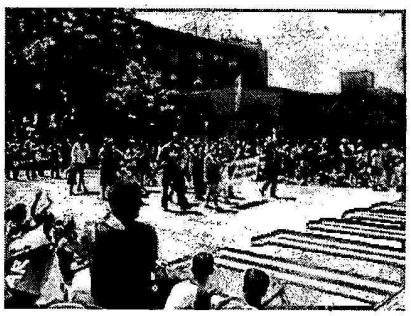
Firelands is not for the faint of heart. It is in part a horror story, replete with blood and dismemberment. It is also a love story, with its share of tragedy. But for those who read *Frontiers*, prepare for lighter fare. In spite of its dark moments, it's clear Jensen had fun with *Firelands*, and he wants the reader to as well.

Michael Jensen and his partner, Brent Hartinger, live in Tacoma, Washington. Hartinger is the author of Geography Club, a young adult novel about a "secret" gay/straight alliance at a suburban high school; and Last Chance Texaco, also a novel for young adults about foster kids living at a group home.

Pride 2004
By Cyprienne

For me, two days was very tiring. I had to get up at 6 AM on Saturday to load my car and get to the site during the designated time of 7 AM to 8 AM. Jessica drove over and met me in my driveway. We loaded all the stuff into my car, stored the decorated wagon and water bottles in my garage and took off for Seattle in two cars. We found a close spot for Jessica to park and I drove both of us on to the site. GCSS was already there and partially set up. I unloaded and left Jessica there to start SBWN's set up. I returned from parking my car and helped finish the set up. I stayed at the booth until mid afternoon with occasional forays out to look at other booths, buy some more copies of Mosaic 1: Life Stories (the book of oral histories that I am in), purchase some tie-dyed clothing, and watch some of the afternoon performances. Lana told me to go watch the Queen Bees so I did and really enjoyed them. They put on a good show despite the occasional technical difficulties. The MC came out and told jokes and handed out prizes during the set up problems. I went over to pick up my car and ended up hanging around Pam and Rob's long enough to get fed. I went home and got a good night's sleep knowing that Jessica would close the booth on Saturday and open it again on Sunday morning.

Sunday I slept until 8 AM and then started getting my marching gear in order. I packed the wagon into my car and a cooler and water bottles and some food snacks for myself. I stopped to get ice and then drove over to Pam and Rob's where I parked my car in their parking space. I loaded the cooler with water bottles, set it into the wagon and set off for the march line up spot. It seemed like a very long walk over to Pike and 12th pulling that loaded wagon. Halfway there I started . . . chatting with a man walking along Twelfth Street and also headed for the march. I got to the line-up spot just as the march was supposed to start. It was late, so we hung around talking and looking at the other groups until we started to move, sometime after noon I think. Christine was fabulous in a purple sequined bra and purple wig. We gathered more people as we marched along. Some of us handed out lavender sprigs (or is it stalks?) that Paul brought along. Some people from Bi-Net were with us and some people brought their children to march with us. Christine and another woman carried the banner for the whole route. Sidney took the wagon from me partway into the march. It was enervating, we cheered and cheered, along with the crowd, for Planned Parenthood (who were directly behind us) when the anti Gay protestors called them 'baby killers'. We got lots of applause and smiles. I had a great time. At the park we split up, going to booths or wandering the festival. I stayed with the booth until time to break down with trips out to visit other booths and to get my picture taken with the 6' tall Healthy Penis. Even got a penis squeeze toy for me and one for my son. I also visited the gay history exhibit at the North West Lesbian Gay Museum History project booth. I got samples of lube, edible massage oil, a sun visor, literature and a goodie bag from a bank. Sidney wandered by at one point and watched the booth for me while I ran off to the Portajanes. Lizabeth stayed with the booth stuff while I went to fetch my car. I had to wait about twenty minutes to get into the site and another twenty minutes to get back out but I didn't mind, I was high on the Pride experience and waited happily.



Thanks to all who worked the booth for SBWN, Lisa, Jessica, Evie, Karla, Christine, Sydney (did I forget anyone?) and those who proudly marched along behind the SBWN banner. Special thanks to first timer Jessica for organizing the march contingent and doing so much work to make our booth presence a success.

Cyprienne

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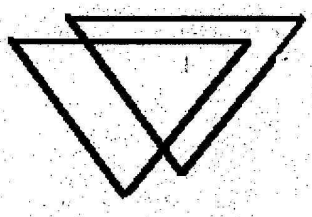
Saucy Dish!
All things sensual and sexy!

No Saucy Dish this month! What's a girl to do? Grab a pen—or fire up your computer—and send your sex-related questions to Saucy for next quarter's column.

This column offers sexuality education and insight into sex positive culture. Information contained within will be bold, opinioned and based on experience and research. Please ask questions about safer sex, our bodies, pleasure, relationships, sexual exploration, sex toys, sexy wear, flirting and more…

Send letters to SBWN Attn: Saucy Dish POB 30645, Greenwood Station, Seattle, WA 98113-0645 or email your questions to: saucydish@hotmail.com



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Comments After Meetings

1 August 2004 Summer Reading

"Lots of books to consider. Great attendance. Thanks to Dorothy for helping me organize the boxes."

"This group never fails to be fun and interesting."

"How we covered 100 to 200 books I don't know."

"Much fun!"

"What a great time! Many wonderful books and good conversation."

"Glad we all have such diverse minds and enjoy reading."

3 October 2004 Flirting Workshop

"Fantastic meeting! Great job Leilani. It was wonderful to see so many women."

"Leilani is a great facilitator and I learned a lot!"

"Can't wait for Seduction and Casual Sex!"

"Awesome workshop! Cute girls! Hooray!"

"Great workshop!! Yay!"

"Fun, with a lot of great information. Leilani is wonderful!"

"Great meeting—I really liked the exercises."

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Horoscopes

Scorpio Oct 23 to Nov 22

Key word: Faith- Dear Scorpio, It is so much easier for you to believe in a tangible world. There is someone near you right now who needs you to expand your beliefs. Learn to have more faith in that which you cannot see. It will mean so much to some one you care about.

-You've survived a long drawn out struggle. It is clear you are going to walk away from a conflict now that you are free of the responsibility that is tied to it. Push aside the guilt. Consider what you are truly feeling. Your gut will tell you when it is time to sever harmful connections. Take heart in knowing that you have done all you can.

Sagittarius Nov 22 to Dec 21

Key word: Communication – Keep plugging at it. It is true that people aren't getting it, but they are very close to breaking the code for themselves. Don't give up just yet.

- You often let others tell you what your destiny should be. You are more comfortable without rules and constraints, but with no leader to walk the path before you, you often find yourself deferring to those who would lead you into a dead end. Mainstream thinking only upsets your heart's intentions. Do your best to march to your own drummer. You'll be happier when you do.

Capricorn Dec 21-Jan 20

Key word: Purification – This is a season for endings, which will clear a path and prepare the way for new and infinite possibilities. Don't fear change. Trust that it will bring with it wonderful new beginnings

- It's all a terrible dream. Keep telling yourself that. OK, it's not a dream, but it will pass very quickly. Lately it seems that things keep going wrong. You are trying your best, but it seems that you've been missing your mark. It's not just you. Everyone around you is just a little off too. Don't take it personally, and don't hold a grudge. In a month or so things will begin to get back to normal and you will be feeling and performing much better.

Aquarius Jan 20 to Feb 18

Key word: Inspiration – It is difficult for you to believe that anyone can show you anything new these days. However, you know you need a new spark in your life. Be open, you will be amazed at what you might learn, and how that learning can inspire you.

-It may seem at the moment that you are headed in the wrong direction. Right now you need to trust in the universe and know that you will land where you belong. Everything is falling into place and you will soon begin to see your plan unfolding as if it were a spontaneous thought-form. Accept your success and humbly own it, as that is the best way to honor the universe, and give thanks for your good fortune.

Leo Jul 22 to Aug 23

Key word: Education – You are learning new things each day. For you it is just a variation on common sense, to learn from your surroundings as you go through life. It is not the same for others. Don't take your ability to turn observation into education for granted. It is a gift that will serve you very well over the next few months.

-Woopie! How cool to find yourself in the position you are in right now. The sky is the limit. Understand that possibilities are best revealed in the details. That is to say: Appreciate the little things in life; they will show you the larger picture and in-turn map out the way to your coming happiness.

Virgo Aug 23 to Sept 23

Key word: Purpose –Sometimes you let the world convince you that you are being silly about your sense of purpose. Of course, that's wrong. Your sense of purpose in life is most important; it is what will keep you motivated and balanced during upcoming changes.

- You have been met with a great deal of confusion of late. There seems to be much nonsense coming from all sides. This is due to your sensitivity to the psychic events that surround you these days. Those around you may be as sensitive but not as aware of their own psychic nature. That leaves you, alone, to deal with a lot of energetic fallout. Lay low. It is best not to share your views in depth with those who do not grasp your understanding of the metaphysical. This is a time for observation and learning on your part. You are collecting psychic and practical information for future reference. This is merely a classroom. No need to make any waves or call attention to what you know right now.

Libra Sept 23 to Oct 23

Key word: Adventure – These next few months will bring new and wonderful concepts to the forefront for you and yours. Take advantage of the experience and learn all that is possible. Recalling concepts brought to light at this time will be useful next spring when you begin new projects.
- You are blessed with the ability to see through the ridiculous. This is a good time to strike, if you are planning to deal with any form of government. Those in power are unable to hide their weaknesses from you and you can use this to your advantage. Take your time and plan your attack wisely. These opportunities are few. Make the best of it. Good luck.

Pisces Feb 18 to Mar 20

Key word: Abundance – Time to take your piece of the pie. Accept the reality of your success and go for it. Take it to the next level and realize your dreams.
-As hard as it is to stay in; it is truly better for you to be quiet and collect your thoughts than to spend your time and energy socializing in large groups. Those who are very close to you will understand your needs and help you through rough spots. Before you know it, you will be up to getting out and seeing the gang again.

Aries Mar 20 to April 20

Key word: Freedom – You are experiencing a kind of freedom that you have forgotten could be real. Don't worry about consequences. This time you are in a stable environment. Use your mature wisdom and good judgment, but ditch the fear.
-Alright, you're going to have to make a commitment now. Can you handle it? Wait! Don't answer that; I'll tell you YES you can!!! Leap Baby! You won't regret it. But remember, you'll be in it for the long haul. Prepare to enjoy the ride.

Taurus Apr 20 to May 21

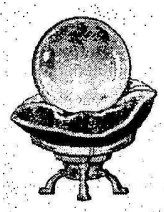
Key word: Birth –It's hard; to give birth, and to be born. Keep this in mind when working on your special projects. It is truly like giving birth. While being a most difficult situation, it can also be most rewarding. Good luck!
- It is your nature to look as fierce as possible to a potential enemy. What you seem to be forgetting is that you may be facing a potential allay rather than a new foe. During this season of visiting and socializing, it is important for you to remember that you could be shutting doors forever with the "shoot first; ask questions later" approach. Do you really want to do that? Take a softer approach, there is a great friend waiting to know you better.

Gemini May 21 to Jun 21

Key word: Compassion – Sometimes you forget that you know how others will feel if you step on them. Now is not the time to shut them out. You will benefit from listening to your heart when dealing with interpersonal relationships.
- You can stop worrying. The battles are over for the time being. You'll have a much-needed rest. When the games resume, you will be in a better position to ward off trouble from a distance. You'll find yourself impervious to attack once spring is in sight. Enjoy your rest.

Cancer Jun 21 to Jul 22

Key word: Openness- Being slightly more available to your loved ones will help you to understand your current position in life. Listen to them and to yourself when you are with them. Be open to what you are hearing.
- This season will bring your current reality to a crashing halt. It can be a good thing. You will see all that surrounds you being brought to the ground. The positive side of this can be found in your sudden ability to survey the local landscape and see what is real and what has been created to distract you from your true purpose. As stressful and tragic as this may seem, when it is all over, you will find yourself in a much better position and state of mind to proceed toward your intended goals.



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Calendar

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network offers support and discussion groups at the Seattle LGBT Community Center. For schedule updates and other events, please call our phone line at (206)517-7767, or visit our website:

http://www.geocities.com/sbwn/.

SBWN group meetings are typically held on the first and third Sunday of each month. When attending support group meetings, please refrain from wearing perfumes or other scented products for the comfort of all.

Schedule of Meetings

Sunday, November 21st, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Potluck/Business/Open. Come share food and help keep SBWN moving. We will have time for other topics after the business is done.

Sunday, December 5th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Spirituality.

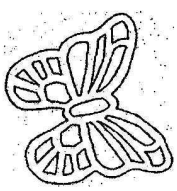
Sunday, December 19th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Social/Potluck. Theme: Holiday foods.

Sunday, January 2nd, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Potluck/Social/Open Share some food and talk about whatever happens to be on your mind.

Sunday, January 16th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Casual relationships: casual sex, sex parties, f*ck buddies and more!

Sunday, February 6th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Poly Lets talk about multiple partner relationships, triads, ethical non-monagamy, polyfidelity, polyamory.

Sunday, February 20th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Potluck/Business/Open Help select topics, volunteer to take on a task for SBWN, share your ideas and help keep SBWN running. We expect to have some time left over to talk about other things.



Local Groups

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network
PO Box 30645, Seattle, WA 98113-0645.
http://www.geocities.com/sbwn/
E-mail: sbwn@hotmail.com

Seattle LGBT Community Center
The Center's mission is to create a meeting place for the LGBT community to grow together, increase public understanding, and celebrate our diversity.
1115 East Pike Street
(206) 323-LGBT (5428)
http://www.seattlelgbt.org

Polyfidelity Discussion Group
Support group and community for people in or interested in multipartner relationships. Discussions and literature on responsible non-monogamy, intimate networks, alternative relationships and community. Bi-monthly potluck discussions are held at 5:30 pm at the SPCC (Sex Positive Community Center, aka "The Wet Spot"). 1630 15th Ave W., Seattle, WA. (206) 728-4533.
http://www.scn.org/~spg/index.html

BiNet Seattle
BiNet Seattle is a bisexual non-profit, mixed gender, social and support organization created to foster a visible community for bisexual, bi-curious people, and their partners in the Puget Sound area. http://www.binetseattle.org

Fridays 7:30-9pm: Discussion / Support group meetings for bisexual and bi-curious men and women, their partners and other bi-friendly folk at the Seattle LGBT Community Center.

Lesbian Resource Center
A community–based organization committed to advancing the status of lesbians by combating oppression and promoting empowerment, visibility, and social change. (206) 322-3953.
http://www.lrc.net